

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Summary

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 5 and 6 have been amended. The amendments to the claims are supported in the specification. No new matter has been added.

Rejection of Claims

35 U.S.C. §102 and 35 U.S.C. §103

In the Office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1- 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Davies et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,224,760). Claim 1 has been amended. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Amended claim 1 recites, “wherein the elongated rib body (111) has an adaptable width extending from the inner radial portion (R1) of the plate to the outer radial position nearer to the periphery (119); and wherein the adaptable width of the elongated rib body (111) is adjusted to a tapered portion (116) of the intermediate bed support rib (117) and wherein the adaptable width of the elongated rib body (111) is adjusted to a tapered portion (121) of the intermediate bed support rib (119).”

Thus, the structure in claim 1 has an elongated rib body 111 that is adjusted to a tapered portion of the intermediate bed support rib 117 and the elongated rib body is adjusted to a tapered portion of the intermediate bed support rib 119. (Specification,

page 6, lines 1-28). This elongated rib body 111 having varying widths along the tapered portion of the intermediate bed support rib 117 and the tapered portion of the intermediate bed support rib 119 reduces or eliminate discontinuities in the cross sectional area of the channels formed between ribs. Further, in order to reduce discontinuities in the cross sectional area of a channel at the radial positions where there are first and second intermediate support ribs 117, 119, the width of each elongated body 111 at any radial position is adapted to partly or completely compensate for the reduction in channel cross sectional area caused by the presence of the intermediate bed support rib 117.

Davies et al. provides “A chromatography column having an end arrangement including an end plate having a fluid opening and a filter extending over an internal surface of the end plate to define a fluid flow zone between them into which the fluid flow opens is disclosed. There is a liner between the end plate’s internal surface and the filter layer. The liner has a surface relief pattern to space the filter layer from the end plate and maintain the fluid flow zone across the filter.” (Abstract). The liner 9 also includes special features such as “major ribs 10a that extend substantially from the inner to the outer edge of the liner 9, while shorter set of ribs 10b, 10c and 10d are distributed between these, progressively away from the centre, to maintain the level of occupation of the flow zone by rib projections and therefore maintain a generally uniform support behind the filter layer 14, 15.” (Column 3, lines 45-60). However, Davies et al. does not anticipate, suggest or disclose an elongated rib body 111 that is adjusted to a tapered portion of the intermediate bed support rib 117 and the elongated

rib body is adjusted to a tapered portion of the intermediate bed support rib 119. In addition, Davies does not anticipate, suggest or disclose that the ribs 10a, 10b, 10c or 10d have varying widths along the tapered portion of the intermediate bed support rib 117 (relative to the other ribs 10a, 10b, 10c, or 10d) and the tapered portion of the intermediate bed support rib 119 reduces or eliminate discontinuities in the cross sectional area of the channels formed between ribs 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d. In fact, Davies et al. specifically points out “The pattern of ribs as such is not critical, and may correspond to patterns already known for machining into an end plate.” (Column 3, lines 60-65). Thus, it was not anticipated, suggested or obvious to Davies et al. to have an adaptable widths for 10a, 10b, 10c or 10d since as Davies et al. points out is not critical to have a certain “pattern or ribs” where for this invention it is critical to have a certain pattern or an adjustable width for an elongated body 111 in order to reduce or eliminate discontinuities. Therefore, it is not obvious for Davies et al. to have an elongated rib body 111 that is adjusted to a tapered portion of the intermediate support rib 117 and the elongated rib body is adjusted to a tapered portion of the intermediate support rib 119.

For the foregoing reasons, claim 1 and 6 is not anticipated or in the alternative obvious over Davies et al. Claims 2-5 depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, claims 2-5 are also not anticipated by or obvious in view of Davies et al. as claims dependent upon allowable base claim 1. Applicants request the Examiner to withdraw the rejections of claims 1-6 as amended.

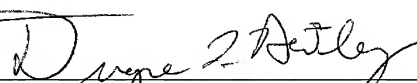
Conclusion

Pending claims 1-6 are patentable. Therefore, in view of the above amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested. If for any reason, however, the Examiner feels that a telephone interview would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

GE Healthcare Bio-Sciences Corp.

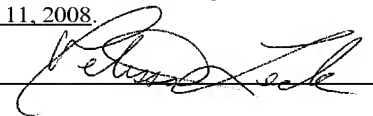
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